

-2-

GB999141US1

BEST AVAILABLE COPYAmendment to the Claims:

In compliance with the Revised Amendment Format, a complete listing of claims is provided herein.

1. (Original) A method of controlling access to data, comprising:

in response to a request from a requestor for access to data stored in an encoded form on a first data processing apparatus, sending a request from a decoding controller on the first data processing apparatus to a second data processing apparatus to determine attributes of a decoding process for accessing the encoded data;

in response to said request to the second data processing apparatus, receiving said determined attributes at said decoding controller;

performing the decoding process in accordance with the determined attributes.

2. (Original) A method according to claim 1, wherein the requestor communicates via an application programming interface with a data access manager which includes the decoding controller, the application programming interface being predefined such that the decoding controller and any received decoding attributes are shielded from the requestor.

3. (Original) A method according to claim 1, wherein received attributes are stored in volatile memory of the first data processing apparatus when received, and are deleted from said memory at the end of a current requestor session, such that a request to determine attributes of a decoding process must be repeated for each requestor session for which access to encoded data is required.

4. (Original) A method according to claim 1, wherein the determined attributes of a decoding process include identifiers of one or more of: a cryptor used in encryption and required for decryption; a compressor used in compression and required for decompression; and an authenticator for requestor authentication.

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-3-

GB999141US1

5. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 4, including the steps, subsequent to receiving said determined attributes, of:

checking whether program code implementing said identified one or more of a cryptor, a compressor and an authenticator is stored on the first data processing apparatus; and, if not, initiating downloading of the respective program code from the second data processing apparatus or another data processing apparatus.

6. (Original) A method according to claim 1, wherein the determined attributes of a decoding process include program code implementing the decoding process.

7. (Original) A method according to claim 1, wherein the attributes of a decoding process include one or more decoding keys for use in decryption or authentication.

8. (Original) A method according to claim 1, including logging at the second data processing apparatus said requests to determine attributes.

9. (Original) A method according to claim 1, including authenticating the requestor to the second data processing apparatus before determining the attributes of the decoding process.

10. (Original) A computer program product comprising machine-readable recording medium having recorded thereon computer program code implementing functions for controlling the operation of a data processing apparatus on which the program code runs to perform the following steps of a method for controlling access to encoded data:

in response to a request from a requestor for access to data stored in an encoded form on a first data processing apparatus, sending a request from a decoding controller on the first data processing apparatus to a second data processing apparatus to determine attributes of a decoding process for accessing the encoded data;

in response to said request to the second data processing apparatus, receiving said determined attributes at said decoding controller;

performing the decoding process in accordance with the determined attributes.

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-4-

GB999141US1

11. (Original) A first data processing apparatus including:

a processing unit;

data storage means;

communication means for sending and receiving communications from data processing systems connectable to said first data processing apparatus via a network; and

a decoding controller, responsive to a request from a requestor for access to data stored in an encoded form in said data storage means, for sending a request via said communication means to a second data processing apparatus to determine attributes of a decoding process for accessing the encoded data and for receiving said determined attributes via said communication means;

wherein the decoding controller is adapted to control the operation of the processing unit to perform the decoding process in accordance with the determined attributes.

12. (Original) A data processing apparatus, including:

a processing unit;

data storage means storing attributes of one or more decoding processes, which processes are associated with specific data stored in an encoded form on the data processing apparatus; and

an access controller component, for retrieving the stored attributes from the memory in response to a request from a remote data processing apparatus, and for sending the retrieved attributes to the data processing apparatus.

13. (Original) A data processing apparatus according to claim 12, including means for logging said requests to determine attributes.

14. (Original) A data processing apparatus according to claim 12, including means for authenticating the requestor before retrieving the stored attributes of a decoding process.

-5-

GB999141US1

15. (New) A method according to claim 1, further comprising negotiating said attributes prior to said receiving.

16. (New) A method according to claim 1, wherein said attributes change for a subsequent requestor session.